AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1.   (previously presented): A method for searching for data in one or more heterogeneous data sources within a computer system, the method comprising:

receiving a request for data at a federated data source;

selecting one of a plurality of Remote Method Invocation (RMI) servers to process the request based on a load of the RMI server and based on whether the RMI server can satisfy the request for data, said RMI server connected to one or more heterogeneous datastores;

wherein the plurality of RMI servers form a server hierarchy;

wherein upon receiving a request to add an additional RMI server, connecting the additional RMI server to an existing RMI server in the server hierarchy based on a number of connections of the existing RMI server; and

wherein upon receiving a request to delete an existing RMI server in the hierarchy, deleting that RMI server.

2.   (previously presented): The method of claim 1, further comprising forwarding the request to the selected RMI server.

3.   (previously presented): The method of claim 2, further comprising forwarding additional requests for similar data to the selected RMI server.

4.   (canceled).

5.   (canceled).

6.   (canceled).

7.   (previously presented): An apparatus for searching for data in one or more heterogeneous data sources, comprising:

a computer system having one or more heterogeneous data sources; and

one or more computer programs, performed by the computer system, for receiving a request for data at a federated data source and selecting one of a plurality of Remote Method Invocation (RMI) servers to process the request based on a load of the RMI server and based on whether the RMI server can satisfy the request for data, said RMI server connected to one or more heterogeneous datastores,

wherein the plurality of RMI servers form a server hierarchy;

wherein upon receiving a request to add an additional RMI server, connecting the additional RMI server to an existing RMI server in the server hierarchy based on a number of connections of the existing RMI server; and

wherein upon receiving a request to delete an existing RMI server in the hierarchy, deleting that RMI server.

8.   (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 7, further comprising forwarding the request to the selected RMI server.

9.   (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 8, further comprising forwarding additional requests for similar data to the selected RMI server.

10.   (canceled).

11.   (canceled).

12.   (canceled).

13.   (previously presented): An article of manufacture comprising a program storage medium readable by a computer system and embodying one or more instructions executable by the computer system to perform method steps for searching for data in one or more heterogeneous data sources within a computer system, the method comprising:

receiving a request for data at a federated data source; and

selecting one of a plurality of Remote Method Invocation (RMI) servers to process the request based on a load of the RMI server and based on whether the RMI server can satisfy the request for data, said RMI server connected to one or more heterogeneous datastores,

wherein the plurality of RMI servers form a server hierarchy;

wherein upon receiving a request to add an additional RMI server, connecting the additional RMI server to an existing RMI server in the server hierarchy based on a number of connections of the existing RMI server; and

wherein upon receiving a request to delete an existing RMI server in the hierarchy,

deleting that RMI server.

14.   (previously presented): The article of manufacture of claim 13, further comprising

forwarding the request to the selected RMI server.

15.   (previously presented): The article of manufacture of claim 14, further comprising

forwarding additional requests for similar data to the selected RMI server.

16.   (canceled).

17.   (canceled).

18.   (canceled).

19.   (previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein said load of the RMI

server is based on at least the ratio of a current load of the RMI server and a maximum load of

the RMI server.

20.   (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 7, wherein said load of the RMI

server is based on at least the ratio of a current load of the RMI server and a maximum load of

the RMI server.

21.   (previously presented): The article of manufacture of claim 13, wherein said load

of the RMI server is based on at least the ratio of a current load of the RMI server and a

maximum load of the RMI server.

22.   (canceled).

23.   (canceled).

24.   (canceled).

25.   (new):   The method according to claim 1, wherein said federated data source comprises a virtual datastore which combines a plurality of heterogeneous datastores into a consistent and unified conceptual view.

26.   (new):   The method according to claim 1, wherein said server hierarchy comprises a tree hierarchy.